

HAMPTON BUDGET COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
November 6, 2007

Budget Committee Members Present

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman  
Michael Plouffe, Vice-Chairman  
Jim Desrosiers, School Board Representative  
Russ Bernstein  
Pat Collins (7:10)  
Victor DeMarco  
Maury Friedman  
Eileen Latimer  
Jack Lessard  
Richard Nichols  
Michael Pierce  
Norman Silberdick

Excused

Dick Hansen

Chairman Woolsey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Chairman Woolsey introduced the members of the Committee.

**Approval of Minutes – November 1, 2007**

**Moved** by Mr. Lessard, seconded by Ms. Latimer, to approve the Minutes of November 1, 2007 as amended.

**Vote:** 8 yes, 0 no, 3 abstentions (Desrosiers, Latimer, Plouffe). Motion passed.

Corrections made to the Minutes are as follows:

Page 1, last paragraph:

The words “CIP” should be changed to “Beach Fire Station Committee”.

Another correction to these Minutes and the Minutes of October 30, 2007:

Eileen Latimer should be listed as “Excused”.

Chairman Woolsey said she spoke with Chief Sullivan and he recommended that the sum of \$46,700 be placed into the Vehicle Replacement account in the Operating Budget. This sum added to monies available from the private detail account would be sufficient to replace the three needed cruisers.

**Moved** by Mr. Lessard, seconded by Ms. Latimer, that the sum of \$46,700 be placed into the Police Department budget under Vehicle Replacement (023-42103-7650-0000) for the purchase of three cruisers.

Mr. Nichols said he thought the Committee should wait until the entire budget was reviewed. Maybe something more important would come forward. Mr. Nichols asked if procedure was changed and the Committee was going to change items department by department rather than looking at the bottom line at the end of the process.

Chairman Woolsey said the Police budget would have been completed if Chief Sullivan had had exact figures with him. She said she considered this action a tie down to clean up the Police budget.

Mr. Pierce said he felt the Committee should clean up as it goes along and then review at the end. This particular item should not go on a warrant article.

**Vote:** 11 yes, 1 no (Nichols). Motion passed.

**Moved** by Mr. Lessard, seconded by Ms. Latimer, to confirm the bottom line of the Police Department operating budget at \$3,674,844.

**Vote:** 11 yes, 1 no (Nichols). Motion passed.

#### PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Chairman Woolsey welcomed John Hangen, Director of Public Works; Doug Mellin, Operations Manager; and Terese McGinnis, Assistant to the Operations Manager.

Mr. Hangen said this is the fifth year they have had a flat budget. This year the budget is in the black. The budget that was presented this year was very difficult, but it is manageable. The biggest problem is equipment. This will probably be in a warrant article. Rubbish is still an issue. Mr. Hangen said change comes very hard. Mr. Hangen said he felt the way to resolve the rubbish issue from a cost, volume and efficiency perspective is to appoint a committee and do it as a town.

Chairman Woolsey said she appreciated the effort Mr. Hangen and his department had made to bring forth options, cost savings, etc. She said committees are fine, but she did not feel more time can be wasted on this issue.

**Moved** by Mr. Plouffe, seconded by Mr. Bernstein, to confirm the amount of \$1,889,181 for Total Highways, Streets and Bridges.

**Vote:** 12 yes, 0 no. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Silberdick asked Mr. Hangen to explain the nature of the overtime wages and if there was any way to reduce this amount. Mr. Hangen replied that most of the overtime is directly related to storms and emergencies.

Mr. DeMarco asked about drug and alcohol testing. Mr. Hangen said that all of their licensed drivers have to be tested. A certain number of names are pulled out each month. There have been no failures in six years.

Mr. DeMarco ask about the zero balance under New Equipment. Mr. Hangen said these items will probably be put into warrant articles. They include two dump trucks, a packer, a sweeper, a replacement to the sludge vehicle. Each of these would be a separate warrant article for a total of \$1 million.

Chairman Woolsey reviewed the rolling stock. Mr. Hangen said the department has three old packers and one would be replaced. Mr. Hangen said they would also add an additional compactor for the transfer stations.

Mr. DeMarco said when essential equipment is taken out of the operating budget and put into warrant articles, the budget is being falsified. Chairman Woolsey said this will be discussed further when warrant articles are addressed.

Mr. Silberdick said that there were 16 items listed in the rolling stock that were listed as "10's" (definitely in need of replacement). He said there should be a new approach such as replacing equipment on a scheduled basis.

Chairman Woolsey said this town could not run for one week without Public Works. It is the most basic service and has been shortchanged.

Ms. Latimer said the town cannot be run without the equipment. She said she would like to see a capital reserve so items can be planned for and prioritized.

Chairman Woolsey said that it is important to be careful to not inflate the budget figure that goes to the public and risk losing it all. When warrant articles are looked at, consolidation can be done.

Mr. Silberdick said he did not understand why there cannot be a capital budget for equipment. If some items are put in the operating budget and others are not, the public will not understand.

Chairman Woolsey said that beginning in 2000 more and more items have been picked out of the operating budget to the point that the operating budget is artificially low.

Chairman Woolsey said she felt the Public Works budget should be left as is at this time. She said the rolling stock is going to have to be addressed at some point in time.

Mr. Silberdick said he thinks the Committee should recommend that the Board of Selectmen identify a capital plan.

Mr. DeMarco said the Committee should work hand in hand with the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager and department heads to make a presentation to the public.

Mr. Lessard said the town is like a business. It is time to address the rubbish issue as presented in Mr. Hangen's proposal.

Chairman Woolsey said that if we want to increase recycling, Mr. Hangen's proposal is the answer. She suggested removing the Tipping Fees and Waste Hauling (\$169,000) from Mr. Hangen's budget to send a message.

Mr. Hangen said he would ask that everyone work as a committee rather than taking money out of the budget.

Ms. Latimer said she didn't feel the budget should be cut before the Committee reviews everything. However, if no progress is being made in this area at the end of the budget process she would possibly be for taking money out.

Mr. Hangen said he would like to define a target and that he believes the Board of Selectmen are serious about this issue. The solution of just cutting the money is not the answer.

Mr. Silberdick said he would be inclined to remove the money from the budget because this is sending a message to the Board of Selectmen.

Chairman Woolsey suggested holding until the public hearing and leaving the option open. Communication can be made with the Board of Selectmen advising them that this Committee is concerned and intends to revisit this issue.

**Moved** by Ms. Latimer, seconded by Mr. Pierce, to express to the Board of Selectmen that the Budget Committee is very concerned about the urgency of coming together with a plan for long term solid waste handling and to interject cost and to define what the policy will be to be fair to all the taxpayers. The Committee would request a progress report from the Board of Selectmen prior to final review.

**Vote:** 11 yes, 1 opposed (Friedman). Motion passed.

Mr. Plouffe said he would like to withdraw his motion recommending adoption of the figure of \$1,889,181 for Total Highways, Streets and Bridges and vote on the entire Public Works budget. The Committee concurred.

**Moved** by Mr. Plouffe, seconded by Mr. Bernstein, to approve the total Public Works budget of \$5,715,237 and forward this to the public hearing.

**Vote:** 12 yes, 0 no. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Pierce asked about the Fire Department. Chairman Woolsey said she is waiting for figures from Chief Lipe.

Mr. Nichols said that if approval is granted for the SAFER program to aid in the replacement of the firefighters, there would be a \$400,000 savings. Chairman Woolsey said the SAFER program would require a five-year commitment. She said the clock is ticking and overtime is costing a great deal.

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The next meeting will be Thursday, November 8, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. At this time the General Government budget will be addressed.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Committee Mr. Lessard **moved**, seconded by Mr. Collins, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Rice  
Secretary

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Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman